1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Individual responsibility was not entirely ignored, however. An old usage lays down the maximum fine that could be levied on a guilty man[1] (as distinct from the *okka* of which he was a member) as nine annas and three *bhaṭṭis* of paddy. Again, when a person was guilty of a grave offence even his *okka* joined with his caste in excommunicating him.

XI

The institution of family friendship (*aruvāmé*) was formerly far more important among Coorgs than it is today. In a Coorg village houses are scattered over a wide area, and a Coorg's nearest Coorg or other high-caste neighbour is usually several hundred yards away on the other side of a hill or valley. Formerly, the jungle was heavier and there were no good roads, and these increased the difficulties of communication between neighbours. Besides, feuds were common, and hostile raids from unfriendly villages or *nāḍs* were always a possibility. A Coorg sometimes had to get up in the middle of the night to fight for his life.

Under the circumstances it is easy to see the need for socially stressing the tie of neighbourhood. Two *okkas* usually, though not always, stood in the relation of family friendship to each other, and were frequently related by marriage. The tie of family friendship was a traditional one, so that two *okkas* found that they had inherited this relationship. In the marriage rites, the *aruva*, or head of the friendly *okka*, is asked whether he is the traditional *aruva* or the *aruva* hired with gold for the occasion. The traditional family friend, it is hardly necessary to add, commanded much more respect than the family friend 'hired' for the occasion.

The relationship of family friendship was between two *okkas* and not between two individuals. The headman of the *okka* and his wife were certainly more important than the other members in this relationship, but this was in virtue of the positions they occupied in the *okka*.

At a wedding or death in an *okka* the members of the 'friendly' *okka* had certain duties, duties which are even now performed. The headman of the 'friendly' *okka* is the master of ceremonies on ritual occasions. The younger members of his *okka* and womenfolk

[1] It is likely that the fine was paid out of the private funds of the guilty man, and that where he had none, his *okka* came to his rescue.